

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1517

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 19569

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH ANDREOTTI

1. I HAD A 45-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI TO PROVIDE HIM BACKGROUND ON MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AS WELL AS TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN OVER REMARKS HE MADE IN A RECENT INTERVIEW TO BUSINESS WEEK.

2. IN DISCUSSING THE ECONOMIC SITUATION I TOLD ANDREOTTI THAT HE SHOULD BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE IN HIS DISCUSSIONS ON THE GOI'S POLICIES REGARDING THE 'SCALA MOBILE' AND HIS TAX REVENUE MEASURES. ANDREOTTI INDICATED THAT HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PRESENT HIS FINAL POLICY POSITION ON THE 'SCALA MOBILE' SINCE THE OUTCOME OF THE UNION - CONFINDUSTRIA MEETINGS TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE WILL NOT BE KNOWN PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON. I ASKED HIM TO SEE IF THEY COULD ADVANCE THESE DELIBERATIONS SO THAT HE MIGHT BE IN A POSITION TO TALK IN MORE CONCRETE TERMS ON THIS SUBJECT. ANDREOTTI REALIZES THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN FROM HIS WASHINGTON MEETING WITH FIRM FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FROM THE IMF OR FROM THE USG. HOWEVER, HE DID EXPRESS CONCERN THAT THE IMF IS 'PIECE-MEALING' THE ITALIANS DURING THIS PHASE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT EVERYTIME THE ITALIANS SATISFY ONE FINANCIAL CONDITION, IT SEEMS THE IMF RAISES ANOTHER. HE HOPED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT COULD BE GIVEN ALL THE CONDITIONS THAT THE IMF INTENDS TO IMPOSE SO THAT THE GOIN CAN REACT TO A TOTAL PLAN.

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3. REGARDING THE BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW IN WHICH ANDREOTTI SEEMED TO VOUCH FOR THE 'GOOD FAITH' OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS, HE WAS SOMEWHAT SENSITIVE THAT HE MIGHT HAVE GONE TOO FAR. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE INTERVIEW WAS GIVEN IN FRENCH AND MIGHT ACCOUNT FOR SOME DESCREPENCIES IN THE ENGLISH TEXT. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE DID INTEND TO GIVE THE PCI A PAT ON THE BACK SINCE IN HIS VIEW THEY ARE REACTING VERY RESPONSIBLY IN NEGOTIATIONS OVER ITALY'S AUSTERITY PACKAGE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE CERTAINLY DOES NOT INTEND TO BE THE ONE TO MAKE THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, AND THAT HE HOPES TO BE GIVING AN INTERVIEW TO THE NEW YORK TIMES PRIOR TO HIS WASHINGTON VISIT IN WHICH HE WILL TRY TO PUT HIS POSITION IN A BETTER PERSPECTIVE.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH I DO NOT FEEL WE SHOULD BELABOR THE REMARKS MADE BY ANDREOTTI IN HIS BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON, I DO BELIEVE THAT THE SECRETARY SHOULD MAKE REFERENCE TO ANDREOTTI'S CONFUSING STATEMENTS AND ASK HIM TO COMMENT. VOLPE

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